

SECTION 2.0 PROFICIENCY TESTING PROGRAM:
INTERIM STANDARD

Guidance Document

developed by the NELAC Standing Committee on Proficiency Testing
January 10, 2000

This guidance document is intended for use by NELAP Accrediting Authorities and laboratories seeking NELAP accreditation. Each paragraph of Chapter 2, section 2.0 is stated below with guidance following.

2.0 Proficiency Testing Program: Interim Standards

First paragraph states:

Until such time as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has accredited proficiency testing (PT) Providers, laboratories shall obtain PT samples for purposes of NELAC accreditation, from a PT Provider that has submitted application to NIST for approval and that has submitted to the laboratory written attestation that it complies with NIST Handbook 150, NIST Handbook 150-19, and EPA's National Standards for Water Proficiency Testing Criteria Document (dated December 1998 or later). Following implementation of the NIST National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) for Providers of Proficiency Testing, and before a Proficiency Test Provider distributes PT samples to laboratories for the purpose of the laboratories obtaining or maintaining NELAP accreditation, the provider shall first obtain NVLAP accreditation for all compounds/matrices for which NIST accreditation is available, and for which the provider intends to provide NELAC PT samples.

What does this paragraph mean: *As of October 25, 1999, PT providers have been accredited by NIST/NVLAP to provide NELAC PT samples. This covers all WS and WP analytes included in the NIST/NVLAP scope of accreditation.*

Second paragraph states:

For all other programs and compounds for which NIST/NVLAP accreditation is not available, a provider of PT samples for NELAC accreditation must be accredited by an American National Standards Institute/Registrar Accreditation Board (ANSI/RAB)-accredited registrar or equivalent Proficiency Test Provider Accreditor (PTPA) or provided evidence to the laboratory of applying to an ANSI/RAB-accredited registrar or equivalent Proficiency Testing Oversight Body (PTOB)/PTPA for the compounds/matrices offered. The PT Provider must also produce samples for these matrices that comply with all criteria published by the NELAC Standing Committee on Proficiency Testing.

What does this paragraph mean: *A PT Provider would meet the requirements of this paragraph if it could provide evidence that it had applied to or been granted accreditation for the specific non-WS or WP PT analytes/matrices that it was offering for NELAC PT studies by a nationally recognized organization. An example of a nationally recognized organization would be one that had been an ANSI/RAB accredited registrar but had been required to discontinue that registration to become an accreditor of PT Providers. Other examples of nationally recognized organizations would be organizations such as NIST, foreign "NIST equivalents" such as signatories to the Asia Pacific*

Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) or signatories to the European Co-operation for Accreditation (EA) or other federal bodies that operate PT Provider accreditation programs. Accreditation organizations that have a Mutual Recognition Agreement for accreditation of laboratories in place with NIST or foreign “NIST equivalents” would also be considered nationally recognized. These PT providers shall also meet the requirements of Chapter 2 and appendices. In order to meet the requirements of this paragraph, it is the responsibility of the PT Provider to provide evidence that it has applied to or been accredited by a nationally recognized body. It is further suggested that the PT Provider submit this evidence to the laboratory, NELAP and NELAP Accrediting Authorities.

Third paragraph states:

For fields of testing for which PT samples are not available from either a NELAP PTOB/PTPA (e.g., NIST) or an ANSI/RAB-accredited registrar or equivalent PT Provider, a Primary Accrediting Authority may accept PT results from non-accredited PT Providers. In these cases, the Secondary Accrediting Authority shall accept the decision of the Primary Accrediting Authority.

What does this paragraph mean: *This section only applies to PT fields of testing for which no PTOB/PTPA, as described in the first two paragraphs above, is available. In this case, a primary accrediting authority may accept PT results from non-accredited PT providers.*